One Snowshoe presents

Kodomo wa Wakatte Agenai

by Tajima Rettou

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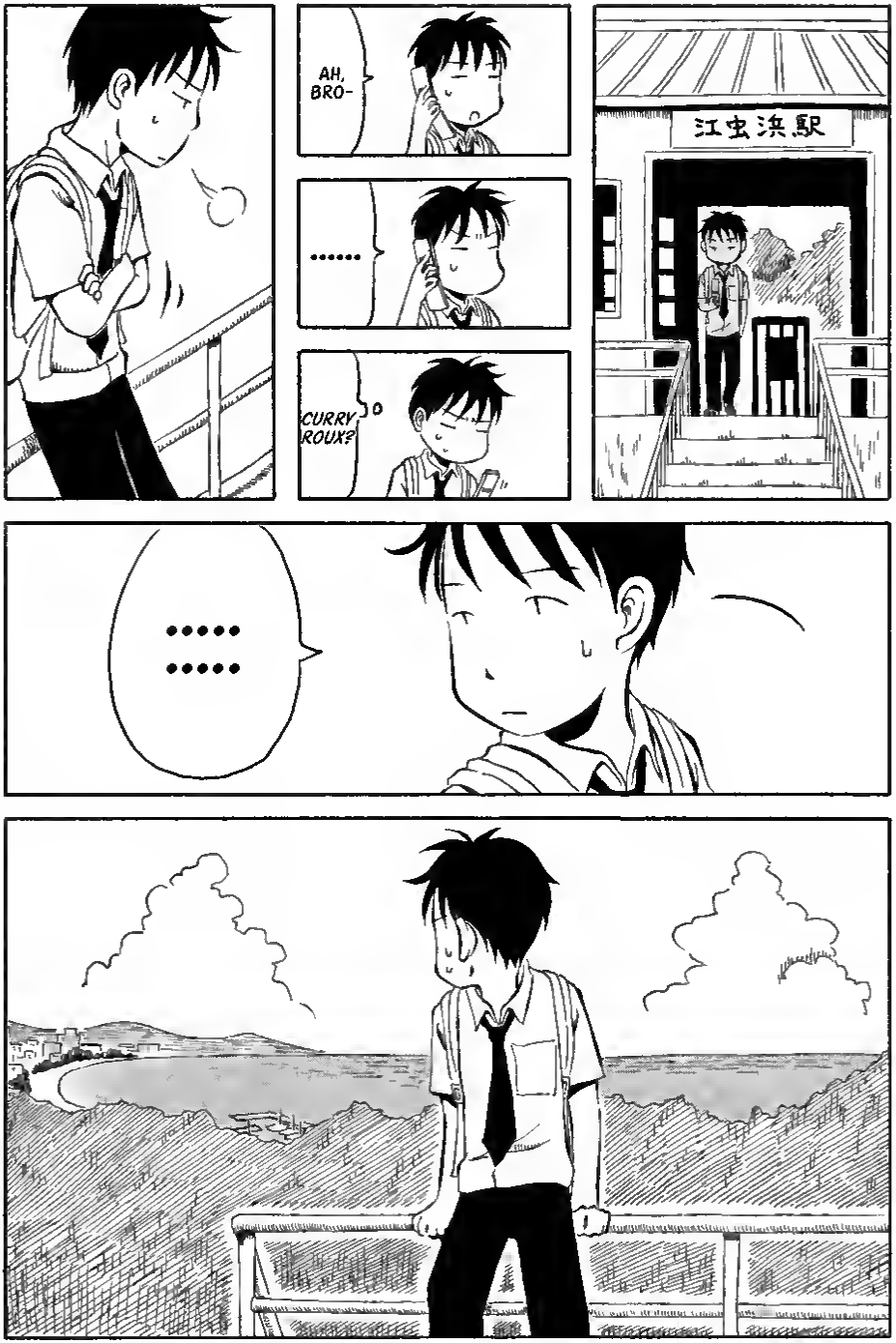
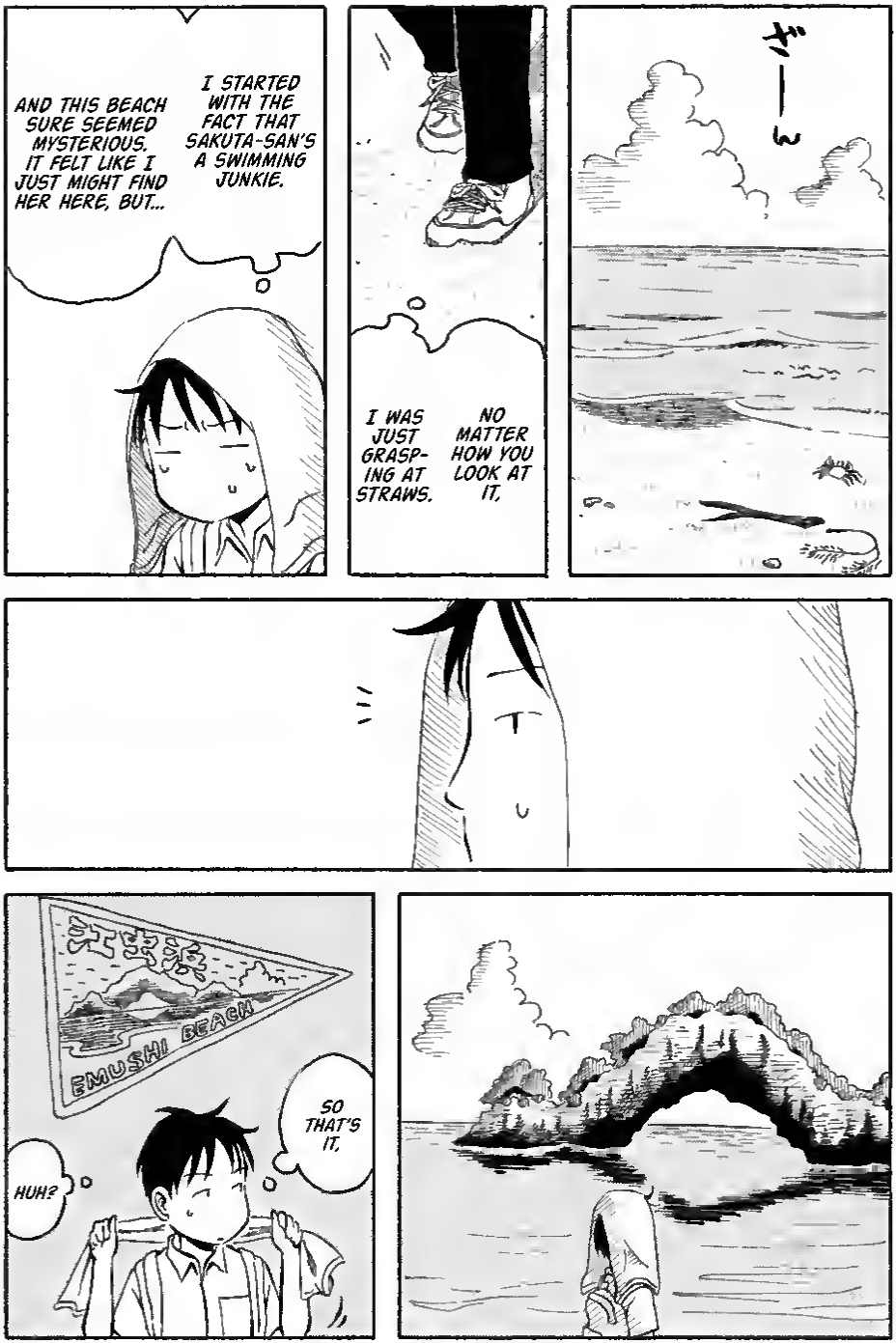
14.
HE WON'T TELL ANYONE THE NAME OF THE TECHNIQUE HE USED THAT DAY


AH, BRO-
.....
CURRY ROUX?
江虫浜駅
.....
.....

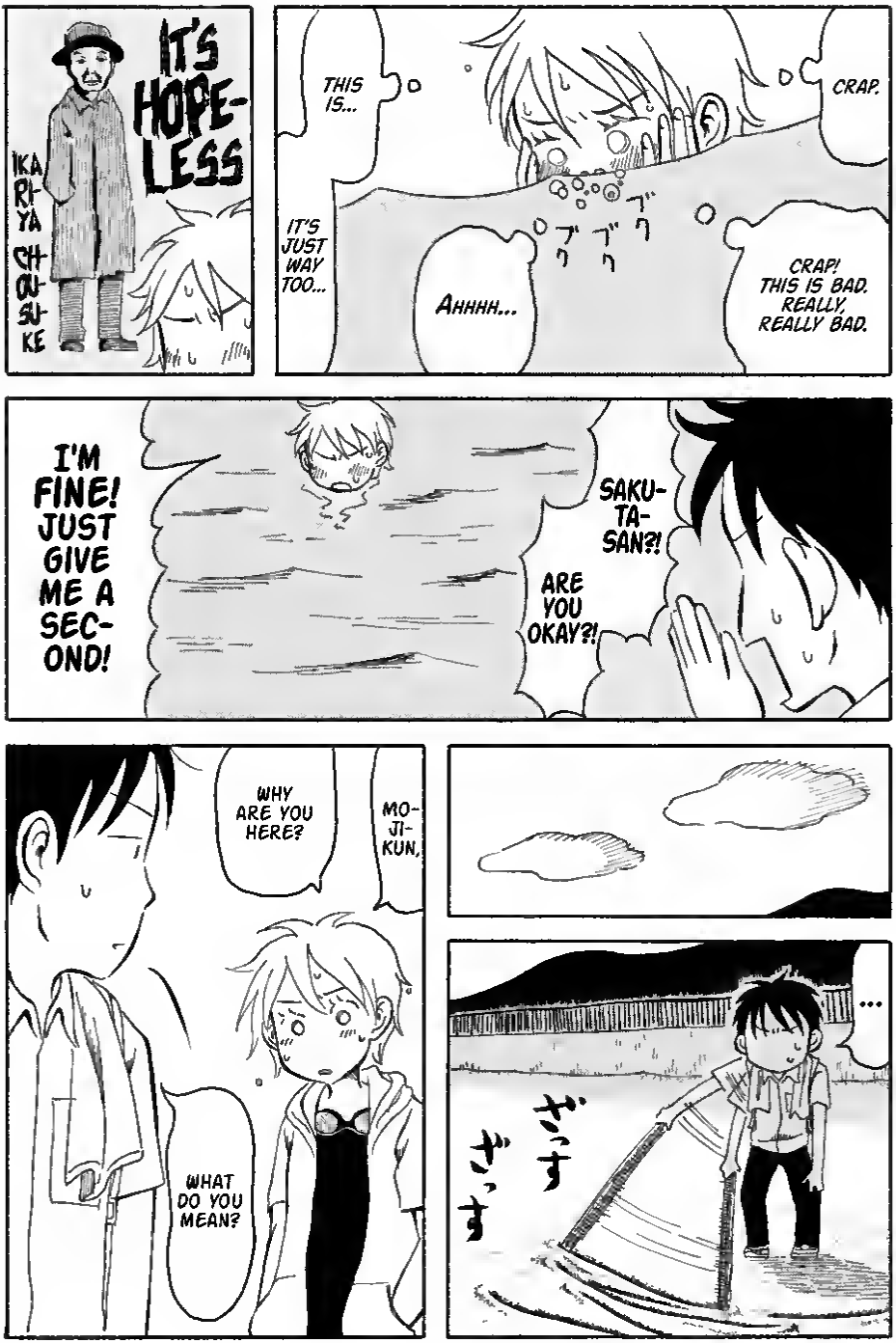

I STARTED WITH THE FACT THAT SAKUTA-SAN'S A SWIMMING JUNKIE.
AND THIS BEACH SURE SEEMED MYSTERIOUS. IT FELT LIKE I JUST MIGHT FIND HER HERE, BUT...
NO MATTER HOW YOU LOOK AT IT,
I WAS JUST GRASP-ING AT STRAWS.
ざーーん
EMUSHI BEACH
SO THAT'S IT,
HUH?

トッ
ベキャ
NOTHING LEFT TO DO BUT WAIT FOR MY BROTHER..
"NOW, LISTEN WELL, SHOU-CHAN."
.....
WHAT'S UP, BRO?
A CERTAIN LEGEND HAS BEEN PASSED DOWN IN OUR FAMILY.
A LEG-END?!
WHEN YOUR PEN-MANSHIP NEARS PER-FECTION... SIMPLY WRITING THE WORD FOR 'FIRE' WILL CALL FORTH A BLAZE TO VANQUISH YOUR ENEMIES...
Y-YOU MEAN IT?!

(Sakuta Minami)

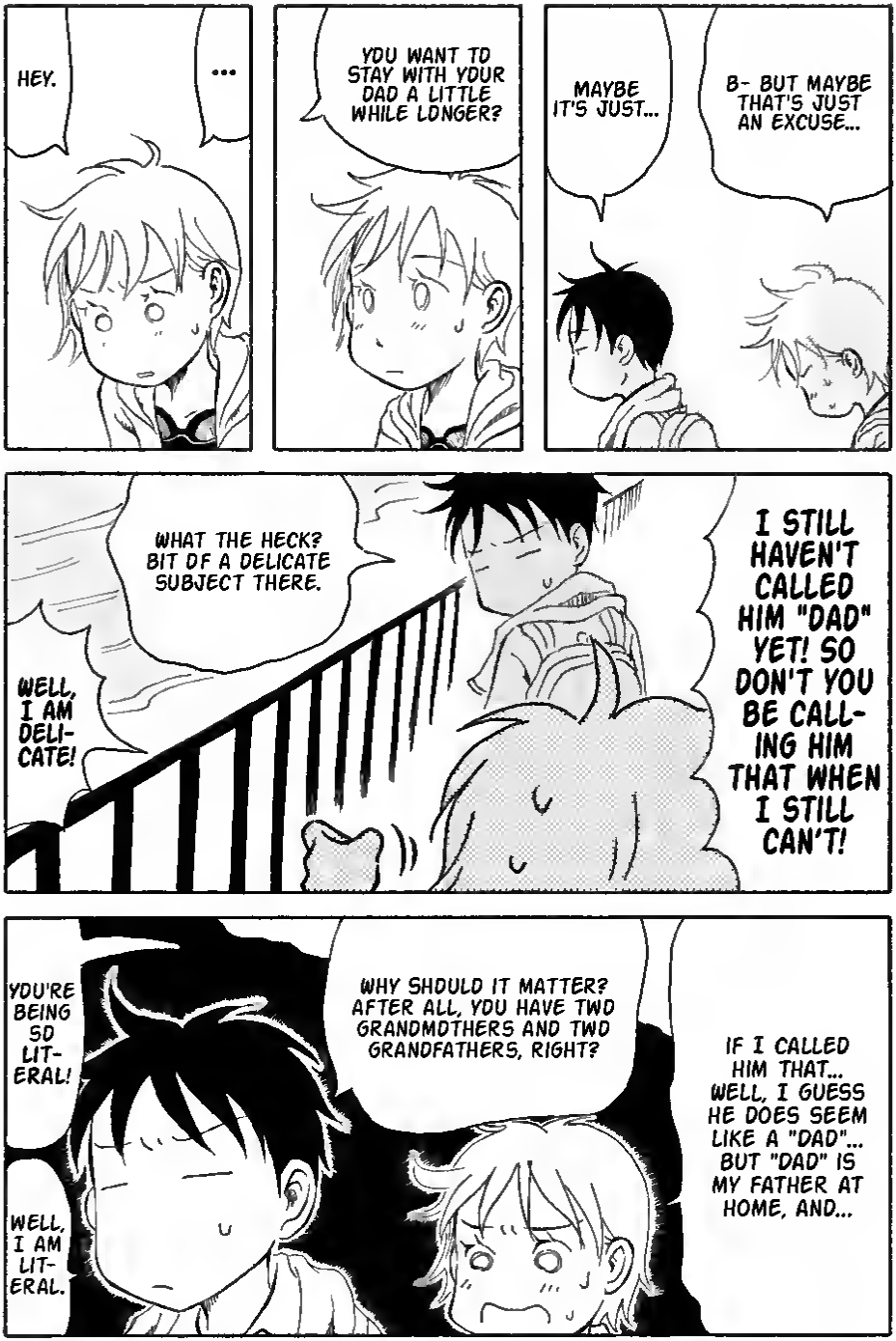
AN IDIOT!
I'M SUCH AN IDIOT!
ガッ
……
……
バシャッ
プハッ
EH?!
HAA
HAA

...NO WAY.
MOJI-KUN?
EH?
...ABOUT WHAT?
YOU'VE GOTTA BE KIDDING, RIGHT?!
WAH!!
AHH...
ブク ブク
.....


IT'S HOPELESS
IKARIYA CHOUSUKE
THIS IS...
IT'S JUST WAY TOO...
AHHHH...
CRAP.
CRAP! THIS IS BAD. REALLY, REALLY BAD.
I'M FINE! JUST GIVE ME A SECOND!
SAKUTA-SAN?!
ARE YOU OKAY?!
WHY ARE YOU HERE?
MOJI-KUN,
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
...
ざっ
ざっ

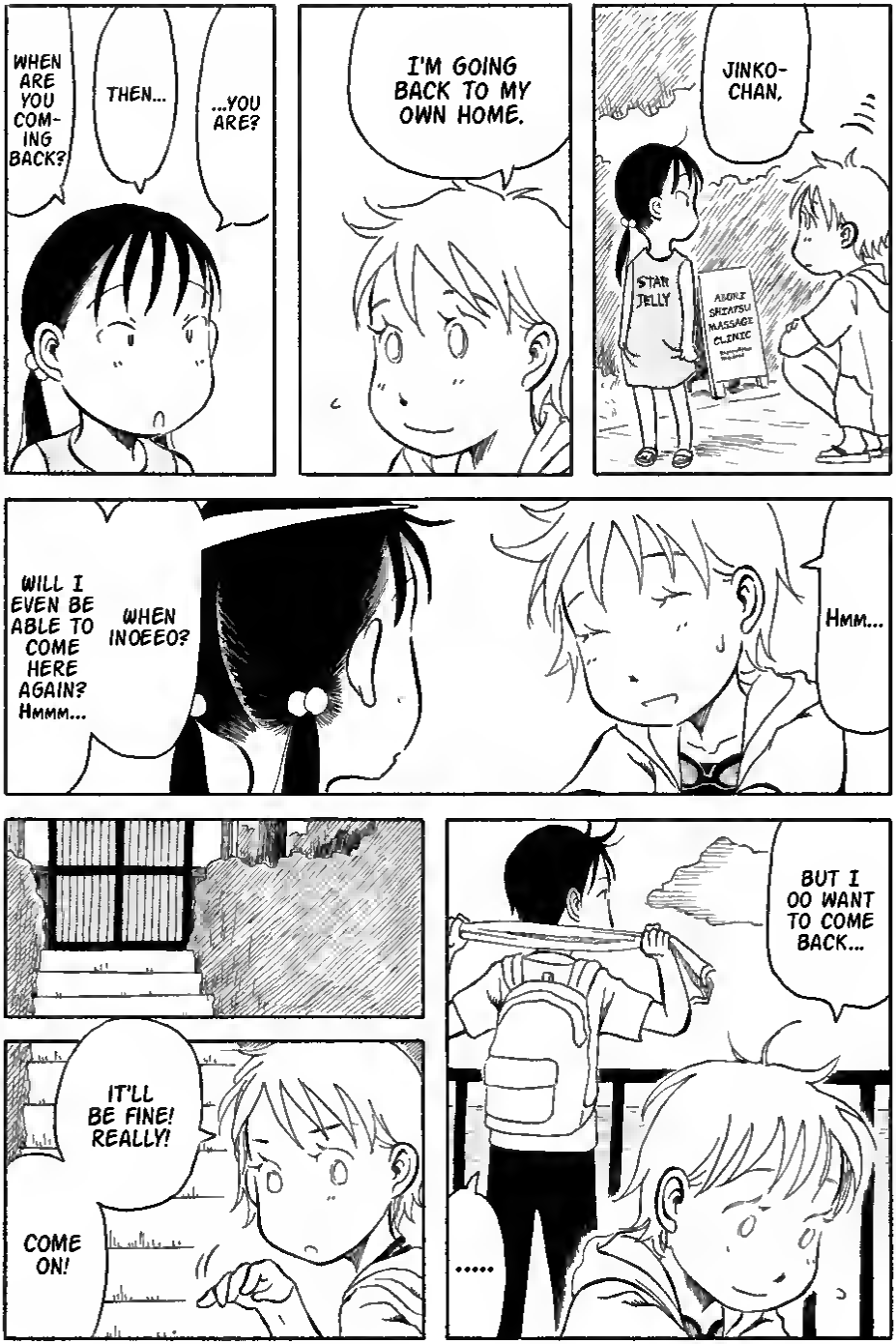
MIYA-CHAN!
YEAH, I OO NEEO TO...
OH, YOU SHOULO REALLY CALL MIYAJIMA-SAN. I'LL LENO YOU MY PHONE.
...?
I'M NOT ANGRY... I'M JUST OEALING WITH A HORSE THAT'S RUNNING AMOK...
...UMMM, ARE YOU ANGRY AT ME OR SOME-THING?
I HEARO THAT CAMP HAO ENOEO BUT YOU STILL HAON'T GONE HOME...
...
SHE WAS REALLY, REALLY WORRIED ABOUT YOU, Y'KNOW?
SHE GRABBED YOU BY YOUR COLLAR AND GAVE YOU HER PHONE NUMBER?!
THIS MORNING AT SCHOOL, SHE GRABBED MY COLLAR, (.....), AND GAVE ME HER NUMBER.
...YEAH. I'M OKAY. I'M SORRY. SO OON'T WORRY.
I'M AT MY FATHER'S.
YEP.
HEY, MIYA-CHAN?
YEP. THANK YOU.
R
R
R
R

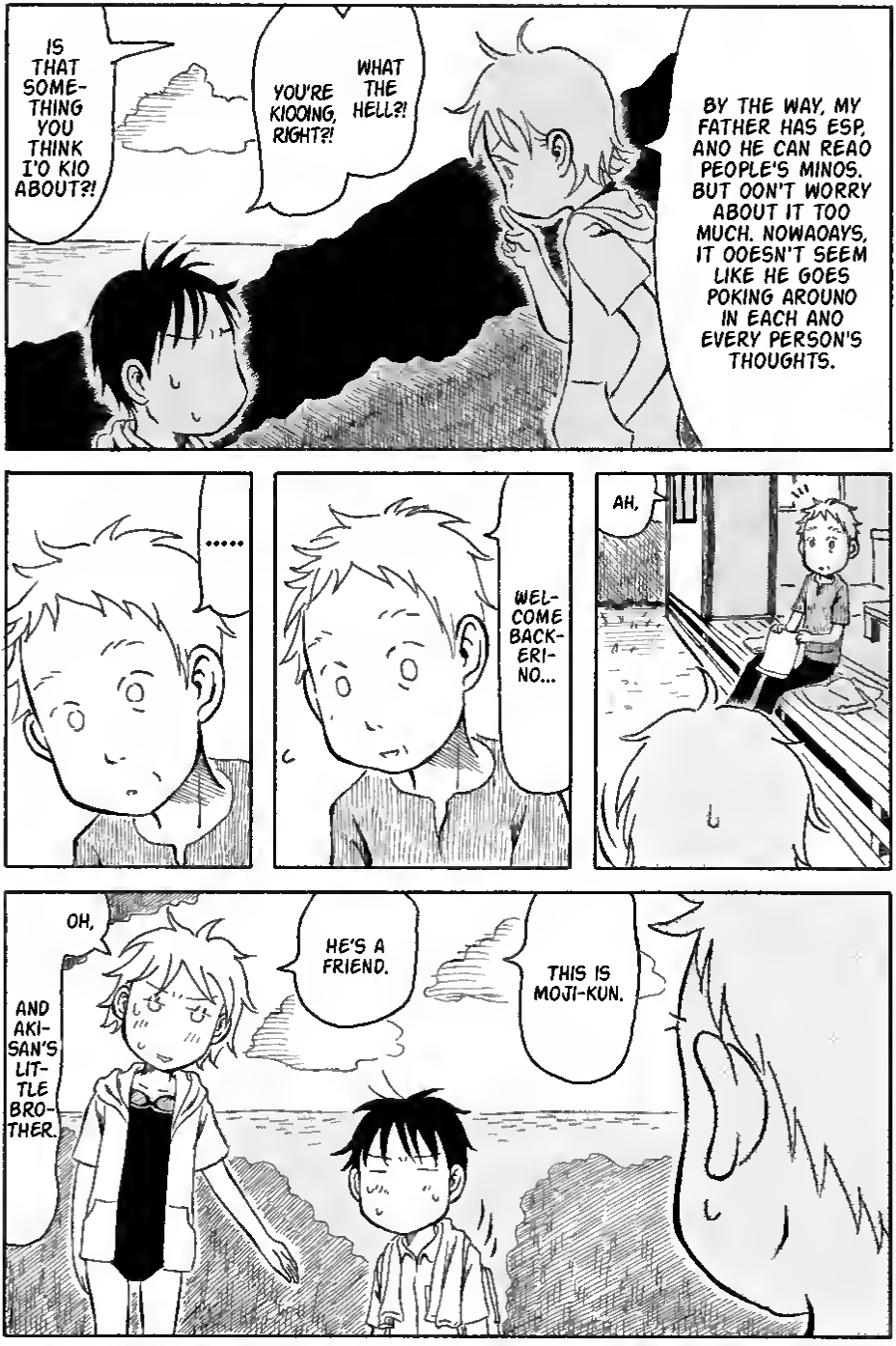
And what language was that supposed to be?
Grachez!
YEP. SURE.
SEE YA.
YEP.
I'M FINE. I'M FINE.
I'M A-OKAY.
...WALKING BEHIND A GIRL IN A SWIMSUIT IS PROHIBITED BY LAW.
.....
ME GO FIRST? WHY?
MOJI-KUN, YOU CAN GO FIRST.
WE'LL JUST KEEP STR-AIGHT DOWN THIS PATH.
BUT IF IT WAS ANY-THING WEIRD, YOU DON'T HAVE TO LISTEN TO HIM.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT MY BROTHER ASKED YOU TO DO.
Umm, HEY...
IT'S JUST BEEN HARD TO ACTUALLY SAY, "I'M LEAVING NOW"...
BUT...
...WELL, THE MISSION'S COMPLETE.


HEY.
...
YOU WANT TO STAY WITH YOUR DAD A LITTLE WHILE LONGER?
MAYBE IT'S JUST...
B- BUT MAYBE THAT'S JUST AN EXCUSE...
I STILL HAVEN'T CALLED HIM "DAD" YET! SO DON'T YOU BE CALLING HIM THAT WHEN I STILL CAN'T!
WHAT THE HECK? BIT OF A DELICATE SUBJECT THERE.
WELL, I AM DELICATE!
IF I CALLED HIM THAT... WELL, I GUESS HE DOES SEEM LIKE A "DAD"... BUT "DAD" IS MY FATHER AT HOME, AND...
WHY SHOULD IT MATTER? AFTER ALL, YOU HAVE TWO GRANDMOTHERS AND TWO GRANDFATHERS, RIGHT?
YOU'RE BEING SO LITERAL!
WELL, I AM LITERAL.

FROM THE INSTANT I WAS BORN, I'VE ALWAYS FOLLOWED IN HIS FOOTSTEPS.
MY BIG BROTHER BECAME A WOMAN, BUT I STILL CALL HIM "BROTHER."
IF I MUDDY THE SITUATION ANY MORE, I'LL BE LOST.
.....
...SA-KUTA-SAN?
WELL, YA WIN SOME AND LOSE SOME, HUH?
BUT...

SURE.
I AM REALLY GLAD YOU CAME.
LET'S GO BACK TOGETHER.
DON'T LOOK AT ME!
...WHAT'S WITH YOU TODAY?
BYE BYE!
ABORI SHIATSU MASSAGE CLINIC
Reservation Required
SORRY I COULDN'T PLAY WITH YOU TODAY. NEXT TIME, OKAY?
TH-AT'S OKAY! I'M FINE! I'M FINE!
STAR JELLY
AH,
YOU HAD A FRIEND OVER?
YUP!


WHEN ARE YOU COMING BACK?
THEN...
...YOU ARE?
I'M GOING BACK TO MY OWN HOME.
JINKO-CHAN,
STAN JELLY
ASUKI SHIATSU MASSAGE CLINIC
WILL I EVEN BE ABLE TO COME HERE AGAIN? HMMM...
WHEN INOEEO?
HMM...
IT'LL BE FINE! REALLY!
COME ON!
BUT I OO WANT TO COME BACK...
.....


BY THE WAY, MY FATHER HAS ESP, ANO HE CAN REAO PEOPLE'S MINOS. BUT OON'T WORRY ABOUT IT TOO MUCH. NOWAOAYS, IT OOESN'T SEEM LIKE HE GOES POKING AROUNO IN EACH ANO EVERY PERSON'S THOUGHTS.
WHAT THE HELL?!
YOU'RE KIOOING, RIGHT?!
IS THAT SOME-THING YOU THINK I'O KIO ABOUT?!
.....
WEL-COME BACK-ERI-NO...
AH,
THIS IS MOJI-KUN.
HE'S A FRIEND.
OH,
AND AKI-SAN'S LIT-TLE BRO-THER.

AH-HAH.
.....
...MY NAME IS MOJI SHOUHEI. THANK YOU FOR TAKING CARE OF MY BROTHER... (?)
CHAT?
CHAT WITH HIM?
SORRY, MOJI-KUN. I NEED TO GO RINSE OFF.
アホー
アホー
...
...
...
...OH.
SO YOU'RE THAT CALLIGRAPHY TEACHER, HUH?
?!

I READ MINDS WHEN CIRCUM-STANCES CALL FOR IT.
HE'S MOST DEFINITELY READING MY MIND!!
SAKUTA-SAN, YOU LIAR!
!
UMM.
EH?
NO...
SO THAT DETECTIVE WAS A TRANSVESTITE? OH, I GUESS YOU DIDN'T JUST CALL HIM YOUR "BROTHER," DIDN'T YOU, HUH? YOUR FAMILY MUST HAVE IT PRETTY ROUGH.
WELL,
COME ON IN.
.....
.....
.....
WILL I...
BE ABLE TO MAKE IT HOME IN ONE PIECE?
AND SANE?!

TRANSLATION NOTES:

Chapter title is constructed in parallel to that of the full title of anime series *Anohana*, whose full literal title rendered from Japanese is *We Still Don't Know the Name of the Flower We Saw That Day* (あの日見た花の名前を僕達はまだ知らない).

Page 65: The man pictured in the second panel is Ikariya Chousuke, a famous comedian active from 1962 through his death in early 2004. His famous catchphrase was "だめだこりゃ!", sometimes translated as, "It's hopeless," "Oh God," and so forth.

Page 69: Point of clarification is due on the nomenclature used by Moji Shouhei towards Aki-chan.

Many intelligent readers of the series have noted the manner in which Moji Shouhei misgenders Aki-chan by (1) continually referring to Aki-chan "brother," and (2) using male pronouns. Two points of clarification here are due.

(A) The environment regarding trans acceptance and nomenclature is very different in Japan than it is in America for a constellation of reasons relating to both linguistics and culture. And the personal justification Moji Shouhei uses for continuing to call Moji "brother" might come off to many in the West as both retrograde and selfish in a Western context whereas the idea of him coming to terms with the enormity of the change in his family in his own time might be more acceptable in a Japanese context where trans rights issues haven't yet achieved the prominence that they have in the West. I think many Western readers, especially those familiar with feminist studies/issues, trans rights studies/issues, and/or linguistics might look more harshly on Moji Shouhei here than the Japanese context demands.

Further, the way in which Moji Shouhei utilizes "brother" comes off a little bit differently in Japanese than it does in English. Shouhei compares "brother" to "grandfather" and "grandmother" in their statuses as ROLES. And for him, ROLE and NAME are literally the same flat thing. They're words and carry not the complications that Minami sees or that we read. And this makes sense given how Japanese use the concept of "brother." Many non-family members can be referred to as "nii-san" or "nee-san" ("big brother" and "big sister"), for example, because of the mentoring roles these individuals play for younger children. In an English context, this "role" designation is far more limited and the gendered notion of the words at issue has more actively political-linguistic implications. So Moji Shouhei's employ of "brother" may seem more retrograde and less permissive in English but more natural, more permissible, or more understandable at the very least in the Japanese context.

(continued)

TRANSLATION NOTES (CTD):

(B) Japanese is not a language that does not routinely use third person pronouns (he/she/they). English... is. We use a ton of pronouns. Translation of chapter 20 (the final chapter) was completed before chapter 1 was even typeset. In translating the series, I was faced with a major writing question: Was there a way that I could craft fluent sentences matching the intricacy of the original Japanese language without using a single third person pronoun for Aki-chan? I thought about it, worked on it. I came up with "no." No way. Too many too wordy repetition issues with multiple instance of "Aki" or "brother" in the same sentences. Which led to the following two choices:

I) Moji Shohei uses "she" + "brother"?

II) Moji Shohei uses "he" + "brother"?

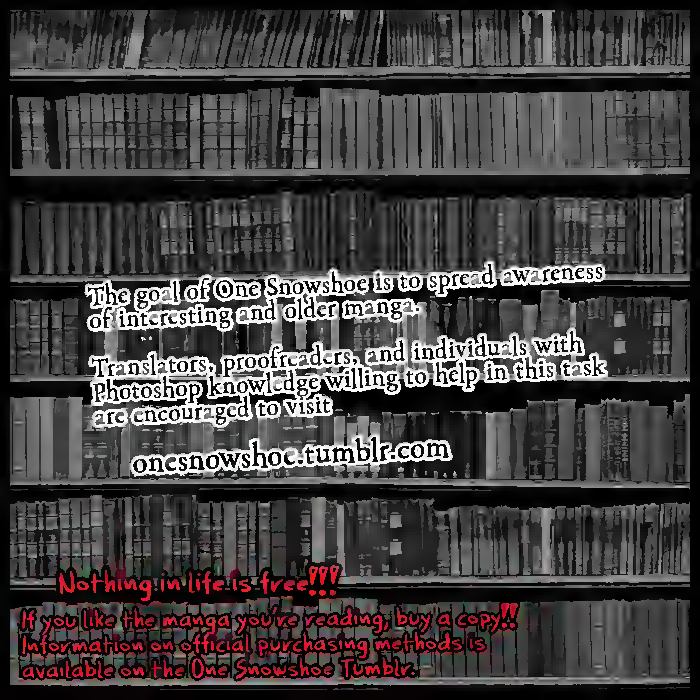
The former choice creating unmanageable cognitive dissonance ("Why is he misgendering Aki on one hand and not on the other?!") and the latter creating more persistent retrograde tone and potentially more aggressive reading of certain lines when viewed through a WESTERN context.

Refraining from using ANY third-person pronoun may have been an optimal translation choice given the Western attitudes towards third-person pronouns and identity. "He," "she," "xe," "ze," "they" are foundations of Western identity for many individuals. Trans rights and the difficulties trans individuals face in achieving acceptance and SAFETY have risen to prominence in national media. But I couldn't effect the writing that way. I tried. The dialogue is incredibly intricate, and the repetition was stultifying. I chose option II because the dissonance read more problematically than the increased persistence. I felt that I had to make a choice between option I and II in pronoun usage. I chose option II. No matter how I translated the series, Moji Shouhei is to many intelligent Western readers' minds at the very least doing a terrible disservice to Aki-chan by continually misgendering Aki-chan by referring to her as a male-coded "brother." Choosing "he" adds instances of misgendering, but... purposeful misgendering is purposeful misgendering. Purposeful misgendering someone four times isn't any better than purposefully misgendering someone 14 times. To a Western reader's mind, ONE instance of purposeful misgendering, regardless of the reason, could be construed as retrograde, insensitive, and potentially even repugnant.

Through translation notes and the One Snowshoe blog, I have continually attempted to provide the CONTEXT that 1) a choice WAS made and 2) how the gendering comes off in Japanese. Given the tone of the series, I fervently believe in the choice I made, and I'm very happy with how the dialogue in the series reads. But the result of my choice is that CONTEXT is important. These translation notes are important.

That said, I know of at least one prominent translator who believes that this translation choice, while thought out and well argued, was entirely the WRONG choice, arguing that complicating the text without context by adding the additional third person pronoun misgendering issue impinges the way the comic is read far more than compromising the writing and style.

The bottom line though is that if you're approaching Moji Shouhei from an exclusively Western context without considering these translation decisions, this translation context, and the Japanese context from which the series was written, you're missing key points by applying a Western perspective to a product of another culture. Disagree with this translation decision? Have a comment? Feel free to post a comment on the One Snowshoe blog or email OneSnowshoe@Gmail.com.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